

DRAFT Charter  
Independent Citizens Advisory Committee on Pension Matters  
May 29, 2015

**1. Purpose**

The Sonoma County Board of Supervisors wishes to establish an independent committee to advise the Board on pension related matters. The goal of this committee is to provide recommendations that will further the Board's efforts to ensure a more fair, equitable and sustainable County pension system. These values should guide the committee as it develops recommendations and the committee is also intended to bolster increased community engagement, add insight and value to a challenging and complex process, and build an improved understanding for all parties.

**2. Committee Charges:**

The Committee is charged with three specific tasks:

- A. Review and comment on what the County has accomplished to date with its pension reform efforts
- B. Prepare a short, 1-2 page, easy to understand description of the current pension system and the roles and responsibilities of the governing bodies involved in the system that can be shared with members of the general public
- C. Review and comment on the currently approved next steps and recommendations for continuing pension reform efforts from the January 27, 2015 report and make other recommendations related to the Board of Supervisor's adopted goals on pension reform.

In addition, the Committee may make recommendations regarding the need and composition of any continuing independent citizen advisory involvement in the Board of Supervisors on-going efforts with respect to pension reform.

It is important to note that it is not the role of this Committee to make policy determinations or participate in labor negotiations.

**3. Composition**

The Board of Supervisors desires a committee composed of 7 members, none of whom are members or beneficiaries of the County pension system. Further, the Board desires to have a diverse set of perspectives included within the committee membership. Examples of the elements of this set of perspectives include, but are not limited to, age, stage in working life, culture or ethnicity, gender, educational achievement, profession, and income level.

Ideal committee members will have the ability and commitment to listen and weigh information with an open mind, engage and fully participate in the development of recommendations, and bring professional skills and expertise and/or the ability to articulate a perspective from their experience which represents the diversity of our community. Since much of the information related to pension systems is of a financial nature, demonstrated aptitude in dealing with financial information will be very helpful.

In the event that the Board of Supervisors is unable to find 7 individuals to serve on this committee in a timely manner, they may constitute this committee with only 5 members.

#### **4. Other Requirements and Operational Information**

The committee and its members will conduct their business in compliance with the Brown Act and in accordance with a Code of Ethics that, at a minimum, requires disclosure of economic interests and recusal from any activities which would have a conflict of interest so that the community is informed and the process is as transparent as possible.

The committee will adopt a set of by-laws and will conduct its business in accordance with those by-laws and will operate within a budget approved by the Board of Supervisors. The by-laws will address, at a minimum, officers and their roles, regular meeting times and locations, and any other requirements in order to be compliant with applicable laws.

For the sake of transparency, the committee will be provided with a county maintained website, staff resources and will have the ability to engage the services of subject matter experts such as actuaries and labor law counsel as necessary, within the approved budget.

Committee members will be paid a stipend of \$100 per full Committee meeting, up to 2 meetings per month, and will be reimbursed for any travel expenses.

Each of the foregoing (Code of Ethics, By-laws, staff and professional resources, and travel reimbursement) are subject to the approval of the Board of Supervisors.

It is anticipated that the committee will meet regularly, at least monthly, and will be provided a public meeting space by the County for that purpose.

It is anticipated that at least initially committee members will need to review a significant amount of reading material including pension reform reports, actuary reports, and summaries of applicable law.

#### **5. Cost**

Initial estimate of cost – \$150,000. Once established budget would need to be formally approved by the Board of Supervisors.

## **6. Timing**

June 2015 – Solicitation for Committee Members

July 2015 – Interview of Committee Member Candidates

August 2015 – Board of Supervisors establishes the committee and appoints members.

August 2015 – April 2016 – Committee meets and completes initial charges. Can complete work sooner.

June 2016 -- Within 30-60 days of final recommendations, delivery of written report and presentation to the Board of Supervisors.